

The rejections of the claims under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) or, in the alternative, under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Strahilevitz (U.S. Patent No. 4,375,414) or EP 617 285 (EP '285) are respectfully traversed. These references fail to disclose or suggest the claimed immunoassay method.

Strahilevitz discloses immunological methods for removing species from the blood (see the Abstract). The method described in the reference involves the use of two antibodies (see the Figures). However, Strahilevitz fails to disclose using one antibody having high specificity for the antigen while the other antibody does not have strict specificity for the antigen. Accordingly, this reference fails to disclose the claimed methods.

EP '285 discloses a method for reducing the Hook Effect in immunoassays with particulate carriers (see the Abstract). The method described in this reference involves the use of two different antibodies (see pages 3-4). However, EP '285 fails to describe using one antibody having high specificity for the antigen while the other antibody does not have strict specificity for the antigen. Accordingly, this reference fails to disclose the claimed methods.

Moreover, neither Strahilevitz nor EP '285 suggest the claimed methods. Both Strahilevitz and EP '285 fail to suggest an immunoassay in which one of the antibodies has high specificity for the antigen while the other antibody does not have strict specificity for the antigen. Accordingly, neither reference suggests the claimed methods.

Strahilevitz and EP '285 fail to disclose or suggest the claimed methods. Accordingly, Claims 7-34 are not anticipated by or obvious over these references. Withdrawal of these grounds of rejection is respectfully requested.

The rejection of the claims under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Cragle et al in view of Strahilevitz and EP '285 is respectfully traversed. These references fail to suggest the claimed immunoassay method.

As recognized by the Examiner, Cragle et al fails to disclose sequential contact of two antibodies (see the Official Action dated July 12, 1999, at page 7, first full paragraph. In addition, Cragle et al fails to disclose that one of the antibodies has high specificity for the antigen while the other antibody does not have strict specificity for the antigen.

Both Strahilevitz and EP '285 fail to suggest an immunoassay in which one of the antibodies has high specificity for the antigen while the other antibody does not have strict specificity for the antigen, as discussed above.

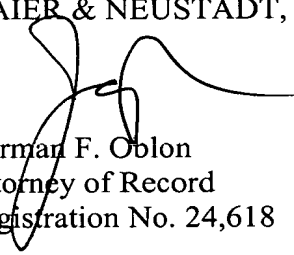
Accordingly, the combined teachings of the cited references fail to suggest the claimed methods. Claims 7-34 are not obvious over Cragle et al in view of Strahilevitz and EP '285. Withdrawal of this ground of rejection is respectfully requested.

The rejection of the claims under 35 U.S.C. §112 are believed to be obviated by the amendments submitted above. The claims have been amended for clarity, and to recite the formation of an agglutinate. The claims recite that the antibodies bind to different sites on the antigen. Withdrawal of these grounds of rejection is respectfully requested.

Applicants submit that the present application is in condition for allowance. Early notice to this effect is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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